



Proceedings

58th TEFLIN International Conference



“Language Teaching and Character Building”

IKIP PGRI SEMARANG

3rd - 5th November 2011

English Education Department
Faculty of Language and Arts Education
IKIP PGRI Semarang

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Emotional Intelligence and Students' Success: A Case Study, English Department Students

Wiwik Andreani

English Department, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This study examines the comparison between English Department students' emotional intelligence (EQ) and their success. The success here does not only include their academic achievement, but also their self-esteem. As university students, they are supposed to be mature, meaning that they can accept the result of their study, both success and failure equally. In other words, it is recommended that they have positive attitudes to accept whatever result they get; they take the responsibility and do not blame other people. This is surely a great challenge for an English teacher to have such mature students. How an English teacher 'shapes' the students in her classroom through the teaching and learning process is discussed in the study. For this purpose, twenty-two students learning English in their second semester are chosen. The students are asked to complete an EQ test. Furthermore, they are given a questionnaire on self-esteem. The result is compared with their EQ test. The data are analyzed to find out the comparison of students' EQ, their academic success and their self-esteem. The implications of the research are discussed.

Key words: *emotional intelligence, students' success, students' self-esteem, teaching and learning process*

INTRODUCTION

In his research, Martin Yate (1977, in Singh, 2006) found out that emotional intelligence has an important role in determining someone's success in his work. He also stated that different kinds of jobs need different levels of emotional intelligence. The levels of emotional intelligence someone needs depend on the frequency he has to interact with other people, work in a team, empathize and understand other people. Nowadays, it is believed that besides academic intelligence, emotional intelligence is badly needed by every student in his study. At least, we, as teachers, want our students to have both academic ability and social skills. However, in reality, only some students have that kind of criteria in the researcher's Grammar classroom. Therefore, she had to create a learning environment that can help students become academically outstanding and socially intelligent.

In this research, there are two Grammar classes the researcher taught. The two classes were totally different. The students in class A were smart, serious and quiet. On the other hand, the students in class B were 'weak' but they seemed not to be bothered with their academic achievement. They seemed to enjoy their friends' company and they did not pay much attention to the lesson explained. A question is raised: When a student does not get good scores, does he

still feel good about himself? Does he have positive view of himself? How about his emotional intelligence?

Based on the condition, these are some problems to be solved in this study:

1. What can be done in the teaching and learning process to help the students achieve academic success while improving their emotional intelligence and self-esteem?
2. What is the comparison of students' emotional intelligence to the Grammar score and their self-esteem?

EQ Theory

The theory of Emotional Intelligence was popularized by Daniel Goleman in the mid-90s. Goleman (1998) defines EQ as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Emotional intelligence describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence or the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ." Besides Goleman, Bar-On (1997) states that "emotional intelligence reflects one's ability to deal with daily environment challenges and helps predict one's success in life, including professional and personal pursuits." From those definitions, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is a must-have ability owned by everybody, including university students and it can be practiced and improved while they are studying.

Robert H. Vela, Jr. (2003) wrote his dissertation on the role of emotional intelligence in the academic achievement of first year college students. The subjects of the study included 760 first year college students from a selected university in South Texas. The results of the study show that there is a significant correlation between emotional intelligence skills and the academic achievement according to gender and ethnicity. This study is different from Robert's research since it covers not only emotional intelligence, but also self-esteem. It wants to discover whether having good academic achievement always results in having high self-esteem.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the study were two Grammar classes of the second semester students of the English Department, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta: class A and class B. Class A was a regular class, held during even semester, 2010/2011 academic year, while class B was held during short semester. All students taking short semester were repeaters from the previous semester (even semester). They were 'weak' students and they were not enthusiastic since the course held them from going for a long holiday because the short semester was held during the long holiday between even semester 2010/2011 and odd semester 2011/2012 (July-August, 2011). In my observation, the students in these two classes were typically different. Class A included students who regarded academic achievement as something very important and it was worth fighting for. However, class B students were contrary to class A students. In spite of the fact that they repeated the Grammar course, they were all happy students. They were not bothered by the bad scores they got in the Grammar quizzes; they were not serious in the classroom.

PROCEDURE

In this study, the data were collected according to the following schedule:

No	Activities	Place - Time	Description
1	Students of Class B were given Self-esteem questionnaire	In the classroom, during short semester	Rosenberg – Scale questionnaire
2	Students of Class B were given another self-esteem questionnaire	In the classroom, during short semester, one week after Rosenberg-Scale questionnaire	Current condition self-esteem questionnaire
3	Students of Class B were given EQ test	In the classroom, during short semester, one week after Current condition self-esteem questionnaire	EQ test (adapted from Goleman)
4	Students of Class A were given self-esteem questionnaire	Through email, outside the classroom	Rosenberg – Scale questionnaire
5	Students of Class A were given another self-esteem questionnaire	In the classroom, during regular semester, after Rosenberg-scale questionnaire	Current condition self-esteem questionnaire
6	Students of Class B were given EQ test	Through email, outside the classroom	EQ test (adapted from Goleman)

The completed questionnaires and EQ test were checked and the answers were classified into Low, High and Average Level, according to Mean and Standard deviation. There were only 22 students from the two classes who answered all questionnaires and test properly, 11 students from each class.

In the classroom, the teaching and learning process was based on communicative language teaching, with pair and group work to facilitate students with the opportunity to interact and co-operate with each other. Ice breakers and warmers were always given in the form of true stories, games and other activities to reduce the students' anxiety and fear. The project work was also done by the students in the form of reflective notes of anything they have learned during one semester, submitted once in two weeks.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Result of EQ test (Class B, short semester / SM)

No	Name	EQ	Description	Grammar Score	GPA
1.	Student 1- SM	642	Average	65	1.79
2.	Student 2-SM	618	Average	86	2.94
3.	Student 3-SM	557	Low	86	2.75
4.	Student 4-SM	659	Average	75	2.39

5.	Student 5-SM	629	Average	88	2.42
6.	Student 6-SM	682	High	84	2.95
7.	Student 7-SM	626	Average	56	1.76
8.	Student 8-SM	620	Average	66	1.76
9.	Student 9-SM	612	Average	E	2.1
10.	Student 10-SM	730	High	60	1.5
11.	Student 11-SM	575	Low	60	1.71

From Table 1, it can be seen that two students have Low EQ, two students have High EQ and the rest (seven students) have Average EQ.

Table 2. Result of EQ test (Class A, regular semester / Reg)

No	Name	EQ	Description	Grammar Score	GPA
12	Student 12 - Reg	590	Average	82	3.6
13	Student 13 - Reg	630	Average	89	3.45
14	Student 14 - Reg	621	Average	90	3.8
15	Student 15 - Reg	634	Average	88	3.6
16	Student 16 - Reg	568	Low	87	3.55
17	Student 17 - Reg	638	Average	81	3.3
18	Student 18 - Reg	572	Low	85	3.3
19	Student 19 - Reg	681	High	70	3.2
20	Student 20 - Reg	556	Low	70	3.05
21	Student 21 - Reg	614	Average	77	3.25
22	Student 22 - Reg	594	Average	92	3.65

From Tables 1 and 2, it can be seen that class B is better than class A in terms of the number of High EQ and Low EQ students. Surprisingly, Class B has two students with High EQ and two Low EQ students, while class A only has one student with High EQ and three students with Low EQ.

Table 3. Comparison of Rosenberg Scale Self-Esteem and Current Self-Esteem

No	Nama	Rosenberg	Desc.	Current	Desc.
1	Student 1 - SM	20	Average	75	Average
2	Student 2 - SM	18	Average	63	Average
3	Student 3 - SM	10	Low	47	Low
4	Student 4 - SM	21	Average	71	Average

5	Student 5 - SM	16	Average	54	Low
6	Student 6 - SM	28	High	84	High
7	Student 7 - SM	16	Average	59	Average
8	Student 8 - SM	25	Average	82	High
9	Student 9 - SM	20	Average	66	Average
10	Student 10 - SM	15	Average	60	Average
11	Student 11 - SM	24	Average	68	Average
12	Student 12 - Reg	25	Average	75	Average
13	Student 13 - Reg	25	Average	77	Average
14	Student 14 - Reg	23	Average	77	Average
15	Student 15 - Reg	15	Average	74	Average
16	Student 16 - Reg	14	Low	53	Low
17	Student 17 - Reg	17	Average	67	Average
18	Student 18 - Reg	19	Average	57	Low
19	Student 19 - Reg	25	Average	80	High
20	Student 20 - Reg	18	Average	71	Average
21	Student 21 - Reg	22	Average	68	Average
22	Student 22 - Reg	17	Average	69	Average

CONCLUSION

From all data, it can be concluded that when a student does not get high scores, it does not mean that he is not good in any other aspects. The study found out that despite the Low Grammar scores the students got, they still have average, even high self-esteem. On the other hand, students having good grammar scores and GPA do not automatically have high EQ and self-esteem. This is a challenge for educators to continuously give positive feedback to the students. Educators have the responsibility to help the students improve both cognitively and emotionally so that they will be successful leaders in the future.

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